

The Essential Christmas Tree Eze 17:22-23

A few years ago, I was in my office when a new employee came in to talk to me about something. I guess by the various things in my office he recognized that I was a Christian. Our conversation turned to the Bible and the things of God. I soon found out that he was very skeptical of Christianity to the point of being antagonistic. The time of year was around Christmas time and he brought up the fact that a passage in Jeremiah 10 actually says that it was against God to have a Christmas tree in your house. What? He said "you ought to check it out." Later at lunch I did, and here is what it said Jer 10:2-4. I was shocked. Have I been disobedient to God? How will I break the news to family? Later on that day God led me to this text and not only did He lay my fears to rest but gave me a whole new perspective of my Christmas tree. I believe that no one can do without the Christmas tree seen in these verses because of the three fundamental gospel truths drawn out of it.

I The Planting of the Saviour (vs 22)

A. Text is prophecy that is Messianic in nature. Could loosely be applied to Zerubbabel when Israel returned from captivity... language to cover the ^{top} generally held... refer to person & work of Messiah, ^{Saviour, Christ}

B. Heavenly Beginning vs 22a-b - Gospel songs run slipshod over Bible truth.. One song indicates there was a search through heaven... Well it was a really short candidate list... There is only one highest branch, the righteous branch of Jehonah, John 1:1, 1 Tim 3:16. From our perspective the story of Christ had a heavenly beginning, but in reality, Christ was God from eternally past.

C. Humble Birth vs 22c - This highest of branches was cropped off and sent to be planted in the earth. This highly exalted Son of God, who the apostle Paul tells us in Phil, to be made equal w/ God was nothing to grasp at, was himself of no reputation, Phil 2:7. He came w/o pomp & grand celebration that would be fitting for his kingly position, ^{me} as a tender twig ^{Bethlehem} echoing Is 53:2 Laid in a manger in a lowly stable in

D. Harmless Being vs 22d - Nature that this tender twig was taken from the highest cedar and planted on a high mountain. A place where all can see it.

I believe this speaks of the display of Christ's spotless life. Although born in flesh, knowing weaknesses of pain, hunger and weariness, he knew nothing of sin. Phorasees could not trap, Sanhedren could not convict, Pilate, Thief (nothing aimed) Judas (innocent blood) Peter 2:22, Heb 7:26 Plant = transplant

Jeremiah 10:2-4 Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh...

Philippians 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Isaiah 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

1 Peter 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

Hebrews 7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens

W. Dyer – Christ uncrowned Himself to crown us, and put off His robes to put on our rags, and came down from heaven to keep us out of hell. He fasted forty days that he might feast us to all eternity; he came from heaven to earth that he might send us from earth to heaven.

John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

1 Corinthians 15:5-8 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

II The Production of His Sacrifice vs 33

A. This tender twig of God was not planted upon the earth for a good example to follow, to set some sort of bar for human ethics, but to produce salvation by his Sacrifice.

B. The Planting of the Seed vs 33a - Notice it is mentioned ^{twice} that this tender branch was planted. Christ was not only planted on the earth but in the earth. I am reminded of Jesus' words in John 12:24, A seed sitting alone on a shelf can produce nothing. It must die. Golgotha may not be highest geographically but highest in economy of God! Seed was buried in garden tomb, ch. vs 33, I was puzzled by "will set it" - Time & Time translated to give" Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8

C. The Produce of the Shoot vs 33b - The burial of this twig was not the end of the story. From that honored tomb, new life sprang forth, visibly. He came forth from the grave. Paul said 1 Cor 15:58 The life and fruit of this holy seed is now a gospel message of the forgiveness of sins upon all who believe. The fruit can be seen in the myriad of change line. The branches of growth that reach with gospel to far.

D. The Preeminence of the Cedar - Many think the usual image that the Lord is planting is that of the famous cedars of Lebanon, the King of the forest. The word goodly - indicates wide, large, excellent, famous, glorious. These are fitting words for the bride of Christ, the Kingdom of God. There is only one tree of God's

III The Provision for the Sinner. VS 3c-d

A. This is the most precious of gospel truths. This tree was not brought up to be admired alone but to ^{be a refuge.}

B. The Crucible Perch - All manner of fowl ^{Preach a little bit} can find a place under this tree. You may be the insignificant sparrow. There are thousands like you. Nothing extraordinary about you. There is a place on the tree for you. Maybe you are the raven, wicked, sly and cunning. You have feasted on unholy flesh, yes sure all have sinned, but yours... yes there's a place for you. What about you broken hearted morning dove, the sorrow of the world hath compassed about you, burdens too heavy, come rest beneath the boughs. Maybe you are the Proud eagle... must hunker. Come to the tree.

C. The Abode of Protection - All manner of fowl can dwell under the shade of this tree. They can take up residence. No more wandering from perch to perch. All that is needed for their life and protection can be found in the tree of Christ. Security, Protection + provision can be found there. PS 91:1-3. There is a storm coming. The judgment of God will one day fall upon this earth, and like the Ark of Noah, there is a place of safety where any may come and find refuge.

IV. Closing: If you have a tree or not its up to you. Jer 10 speaks of idolatry. You get problems if you are hoarding... But now when I look at my tree I'm reminded of Ez 17. All the ornaments are like these fowl, some beautiful ^{on the tree} but all

Psalms 91:1-2 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He
is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.